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ABSTRACT

In order for ethnic identity to develop as a methodologically sound area of psychological research, it is essential to agree on definitions and to develop and validate measures that can be used in common by researchers working with different groups. This report analyzes 62 empirical studies of ethnic identity published in 36 journals since 1972. The following topics are discussed: (1) the assessment of the components of ethnic identity; (2) the structure of ethnic identity; (3) the relationship of ethnic identity to the majority culture; (4) the study of changes in ethnic identity over time and context; and (5) the personal implications of ethnic identity. The following theories appear to form the conceptual bases of about one-third of the studies reviewed: (1) social identity theory; (2) social field theory; (3) acculturation and assimilation theory; (4) Erikson's ideas on identity development and the impact of social and cultural factors; (5) psychoanalytic identity formation theory; and (6) black identity development theory. Definitions of the following concepts are suggested: (1) ethnic identity; (2) identification; (3) self-identification; (4) ethnicity; (5) ethnic attitudes; (6) ethnic behaviors; and (7) ethnic identity development. Common measurement techniques are discussed in relation to a suggested conceptual model and directions for future research are suggested. Two charts and a list of 94 references are appended. (FMW)

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ETHNIC IDENTITY IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Jean S. Phinney

Department of Family Studies

California State University, Los Angeles

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Abstract

This article reviews 62 studies of ethnic identity published in refereed journals in the past 15 years. It discusses the ways in which ethnic identity has been measured; the structure of ethnic identity as presented in research; various conceptualizations of ethnic identity in relation to the majority culture; empirical findings on ethnic identity; and theories that have guided research. The review concludes with suggested definitions of key concepts and recommendations for future research. In order for ethnic identity to develop as a methodologically sound area of psychological research, there needs to be agreement on the meaning of concepts and valid measures that can be used across ethnic groups and settings.

ETHNIC IDENTITY IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH

In spite of the growing proportion of minority group members in the United States and other Western countries and the increasing concern with issues of ethnicity and pluralism, psychological research on the impact of ethnicity on the individual in multiethnic societies is rudimentary and fragmented. Most of the empirical work on ethnic identity has concentrated on young children, with a focus on minority children's racial misidentification, or preference for White stimulus figures (Aboud, 1987; Brand, Ruiz, & Padilla, 1974).

A number of writers have addressed conceptually the issue of ethnic identity in adults (e.g., Alba, 1985; Arce, 1981; Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1983; Dashefsky, 1976; DeVos & Romanucci-Ross, 1975; Frideres & Goldenberg, 1982; Mendelberg, 1986; Ostrow, 1977; Staiano, 1980; Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Yancey, Ericksen, & Juliani, 1976; Zinn, 1980). However, the theoretical writing far outweighs empirical research. Published studies on ethnic identity in adolescents and adults have generally focused on single groups and have used widely discrepant definitions and measures of ethnic identity, making comparisons and generalizations ambiguous and difficult. The findings that have been reported are often inconclusive or contradictory, both about the nature and structure of ethnic identity and about the way it is related to other constructs.

Nonetheless, some of the existing research presents interesting approaches to the study of ethnic identity and raises provocative questions about the measurement, structure, and implications of ethnic identity. The primary goal of this paper is to review the empirical

literature on ethnic identity in adolescents and adults, in order to describe (a) the way in which the construct has been defined and measured, (b) the conceptualizations that have guided research, and (c) the empirical conclusions that can be drawn. It is not my intention to discuss theoretical issues, except as they are dealt with empirically. The main thesis of this review is that past research has made little progress in providing valid generalizations about ethnic identity, because of lack of agreement on the way concepts are operationalized and the general absence of studies using similar methods across different groups. In order for ethnic identity to develop as a methodologically sound area of psycholoigcal research, there needs to be agreement on the meaning of concepts and valid measures that can be used across groups and settings.

In order to review the literature, an extensive search has been completed to locate journal articles from psychology, sociology, and allied social sciences, published since 1972, that dealt empirically with ethnic or racial identity in adolescents (12 years or older) or adults. The material reviewed was limited in several ways. In order to focus on research that had been subject to peer review and that was accessible to readers, only published journal articles were included. Books, chapters, dissertations, and unpublished papers were excluded, with some noted exceptions. Also excluded were articles that were purely conceptual or that presented only case studies and involved no empirical investigation, articles that dealt only with social identity (social class, political affiliation, national and religious identity) and did not include ethnicity, or articles in which the term ethnic identity was used to mean

simply the ethnic group membership of the subjects (e.g., Furnham & Kirris, 1983).

A total of 62 published empirical articles were located that dealt substantively with ethnic identity beyond childhood. The articles examined many different ethnic groups and presented widely differing approaches to the meaning, measurement, and study of ethnic identity in adolescents and adults. They varied widely both in conceptualization and measurement and in the terminology applied to ethnic identity and its components. They differed in whether ethnic identity was simply described or considered a variable whose antecedents, correlates, or outcomes were studied.

In order to review this diverse material, this article begins with an overview of the studies. It then details the components of ethnic identity that have been studied and describes the way in which these have been measured. This is followed by an examination of the structure of ethnic identity as presented in research and the ways in which researchers have conceptualized ethnic identity in relation to the majority culture. The next three sections discuss findings on changes in ethnic identity with age or development and with context; personal implications of ethnic identity; and theories that have guided research. The review concludes with suggested definitions of ethnic identity and related concepts, recommendations for the development of measures that could be used across diverse groups, and directions for future research.

OVERVIEW: STUDIES OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

The articles reviewed focus on a variety of ethnic groups. The largest group of studies, nearly half of the total, focuses on White

ethnic groups, such as Greek and Italian Americans or French Canadians. These articles include (in order of frequency) studies from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Israel, and Australia, and one each from the Netherlands and South Africa. Within White ethnic groups, Jews have been the most studied subgroup. In a few studies, White subjects are included primarily as a contrast group to an ethnic minority group (Hispanic, Black, or Asian); in these cases the White subjects are undifferentiated as to ethnic origin.

The second largest group of studies, sixteen all together, involve Black subjects; these are mostly from the United States. Ten studies, entirely from the United States, deal with Hispanic subjects. Six studies focus on Asians; of these, half are from the United States, one from Canada, and two, dealing with (East) Indians, are from England. It is noteworthy that the distribution of studies has been very uneven, with many studies of White ethnic groups and Black Americans, but few of Asian Americans, Hispanics, or American Indians.

For the most part, these studies represent isolated efforts to define and study ethnic identity for a particular group of interest; rarely have researchers conducted follow-up studies to develop or extend a measure or elaborate on concepts developed in the article. Exceptions to this generalization are three groups of articles where similar methodology has been used in two or more studies: four studies of White ethnic groups by Giles and his colleagues (Christian, Gadfield, Giles, & Taylor, 1976; Giles, Llado, McKirnan, & Taylor, 1979; Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977; Giles, Taylor, Lambert, & Albert, 1976), using multidimensional scaling; four studies using a measure of Black identity

by Parham and Helms (Carter & Helms, 1987; Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a, 1985b); and two (Zak, 1973; Zak, 1976) studying Israelis and Jews. However, the research over-all presents a picture of fragmented efforts by many different researchers, working individually with particular ethnic groups and developing measures of limited generality, without continuing the work or building on related work to establish a research tradition that could make a contribution to the field. In fact, many studies appear to be single studies pursued because of personal interest; over half the articles have as one author an individual who is either known to be from the group under study or has a name that identifies him or her as member of that group. Thus many published studies (like many dissertations that were identified but not analyzed for this review) may stem from an effort to understand one's own ethnicity.

The articles represent research from a diversity of fields, published in 36 different journals, the majority from psychology, but also from sociology, anthropology, social work, and education. Perhaps because the studies represent a variety of fields and are published in many different journals, researchers often appear unaware of previous work; i.e., they often do not cite previous relevant work. Therefore there is much duplication of effort, as each researcher develops new measures independently.

Nevertheless, the studies provide a starting point for understanding how different researchers have sought to understand and study this complex concept. The following section examines the various ways in which ethnic identity has been assessed.

ASSESSING THE COMPONENTS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

Before looking at the actual components of ethnic identity that have been assessed, it is useful to examine measurement construction. Measures have been based on theoretical conceptualizations in a few cases, but generally the measures appear to be derived intuitively from a sense of the unique qualities of a particular group. Studies using quantitative measures generally begin with a list of components that are presumed (by the researcher or various consultants) either to characterize a particular group or to provide a basis for testing a hypothesis regarding ethnic identity. Specific items are then developed to tap these components, and a measure is constructed.

A variety of data collection methods have been employed in the studies reviewed. The majority attempt to assess ethnic identity objectively, through questionnaires, interviews, or sorting tasks, but a few use projective techniques, such as drawing tasks. The variety of types of data collection raises the issue of measurement specificity, that is, the extent to which results are comparable across different methods.

Measures vary in length from one or two items to lengthy procedures with many items. Although a few articles include a complete list of the items used, most give only selected examples, or, in some cases, none. In these latter cases, the content of the items must be inferred. In the following discussion, specific examples of items are given where possible in order to convey the sense of a particular component and illustrate different ways of assessing it.

Of the studies analyzed, less than a fifth present reliability information on the measures used. The reliability coefficients are

generally measures of internal consistency (usually Cronbach's alpha). The figures given show a wide range, even within studies. Some range from low to moderate (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b: .50 to .80; Tzuriel & Klein, 1977, .60 to .66; Der-Karabetian, 1980: .62 to .84). Others are moderate to high (Garcia & Lega, 1979: .84; Teske & Nelson, 1973, .74 to .90; Ullah, 1987, .80; Zak, 1973, .78 to .90; Zak, 1976, .75 to .83). Rarely has the same measure been used in more than one study in order to establish reliability with different samples, and in no studies is there evidence for test-retest reliability with the same subjects.

Although a great variety of components have been used by researchers in studying ethnic identity, they can be grouped, for purposes of discussion, into the following categories: self-identification; sense of belonging; attitudes; and participation in cultural activities.

Self-identification

Self-identification (also called self-definition or self-labelling) refers to the ethnic label one uses for oneself. Although it would appear to be an essential component of ethnic identity, it is included in only about half of the studies. In some studies it is considered a demographic or grouping variable, while in others it is treated as an outcome variable or as one of several components that make up ethnic identity.

Items assessing self-identification can be presented in a variety of ways. The approach used in a number of studies is to have subjects rate themselves or match labels of themselves in terms of similarity to individuals from particular cultural background (Christian et al., 1976; Giles et al., 1976; Giles et al., 1977; Giles et al., 1979; Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985; Taylor, Bassili, & Aboud, 1973). Other studies use

wording such as: "I think of myself as ..." (Hutnik, 1986), or "How do you define yourself?" (with several choices given) (Ullah, 1987).

In many studies, self-identification is not specifically assessed. In some cases, subjects were recruited from groups whose ethnicity is known to the researcher (e.g., Jewish student groups, in Davids, 1982; and Lax & Richards, 1981; or students at Armenian schools, in Der-Karabetian, 1980), so that is was presumed unnecessary to assess self-definition. In some studies the subjects are simply defined as group members without explanation of how this was determined. None of the studies with Black subjects includes self-identification; the assumption apparently is that ethnicity is self-evident for members of this group and need not be assessed. The failure to assess self-definition with any group raises the possibility that subjects were included who do not consider themselves members of the group in question. This is of course a particularly important issue in the study of ethnic groups within a single racial group (e.g., White ethnics) and of individuals of mixed background who may not look like the group with which they identify. However, the discrepancy between appearance and self-identification can exist in virtually all groups.

Attitudes

Independent of their self-identification, people can have both positive and negative attitudes toward their own group. These attitudes have been examined in over half of the studies reviewed. Positive attitudes include pride, pleasure, satisfaction, or contentment with one's own group. They are assessed by items such as "[I am] proud to identify with [my own group]" and "[I] consider [my own] culture rich

and precious" (Driedger, 1976]; "[I am similar to] people who feel good about their cultural background" (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985); or a question like: "How much pride do you feel towards [your own group]?" (Phinney, 1989; Ullah, 1987).

The term acceptance is frequently used for positive attitudes, particularly in studies involving Black subjects (Paul & Fischer, 1980). Typical items include "I believe that being Black is a positive experience" or "I believe that because I am Black I have many strengths" (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b); "I feel excitement and joy in Black surroundings (Krate, Leventhal, & Silverstein, 1974; Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b). Acceptance of being Black is often phrased in contrast to White culture: "When I think of myself as a Black person, I feel I am more attractive and smarter than any White person" (Morten & Atkinson, 1983). Acceptance of being Black has also been assessed indirectly, through having subjects draw figures and determining whether they include Black characteristics. While this method has commonly been used with children, it has also been employed in studies with adults (Bolling, 1974, Kuhlman, 1979).

An indirect but presumably powerful way of assessing attitudes is to determine whether the subject would remain as a group member if given the choice. Several studies ask whether the subject, if given a chance to be born again, would wish to be born [ethnic] (Der-Karabetian, 1980, Tzuriel & Klein, 1977, Zak, 1973). Two additional indirect ways of measuring positive (and negative) attitudes are to have subjects rate themselves and their group in relation to adjectives with good and bad connotations (Grossman, Wirt, & Davids, 1985), or to rate a speech that

had been tape recorded in different languages and accents (Bourhis, Giles, & Tajfel, 1973). The latter case included adjectives such as arrogant, friendly, self-confident, or snobbish.

The absence of positive attitudes, or actual negative attitudes, can be seen as a denial of one's ethnic identity. They include "displeasure, dissatisfaction, discontentment" with one's ethnicity (Lax & Richards, 1981); feelings of inferiority, or a desire to hide one's cultural identity (Driedger, 1976; Ullah, 1985). An item used to tap negative feelings is: "(I am like/unlike) Kids from other countries who try to hide their background" (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985). Negative feelings may be a normal aspect of ethnic identity for some groups; thus "Jewish identity by itself does not imply acceptance of one's Jewishness....Being Jewish stirs up many ambivalent feelings" (Lax & Richards, 1981, pp 306-307).

In studies with Black subjects, the negative attitudes are phrased both as denial of Blackness and as preference for White culture (Morten & Atkinson, 1983, Paul & Fischer, 1980): "Most Black people I know are failures" (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b); "I believe that large numbers of Blacks are untrustworthy" (Krate et al., 1974); "Sometimes I wish I belonged to the White race"; and "I believe that White people are intellectually superior to Blacks" (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b; Krate et al, 1974).

Sense of belonging

The sense of belonging to a group, included in about a fourth of the studies, has been assessed in a number of ways: "I am a person who (never, seldom, sometimes, often, very often) feels strong bonds toward

(my own group)" (Driedger, 1976); "My fate and future are bound up with that of (my own group)" (Zak, 1973, 1976; Der-Karabetian, 1980); "I feel an overwhelming attachment to (my own group) (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b; Krate et al., 1974). The subject may express a feeling of belonging (Clark, Kaufman, & Pierce, 1976; Lax & Richards, 1981) or a sense of "peoplehood" (Lax & Richards, 1981), or present self as (ethnic) (Clark et al., 1976; Elizur, 1984). A variation of this attitude is the importance attributed to one's ethnicity (Davids, 1982; Zak, 1973, 1976) or a feeling of concern for one's culture (Christian et al., 1976). The assessment of a sense of belonging or of importance is particularly common in studies that involve Blacks and Jews.

A sense of belonging to one's own group can also be defined in contrast to another group; for example the "experience of exclusion, contrast or separateness from (other group members) (Lax & Richards, 1981); "How much difference do you feel between yourself and [members of another group]?" (Ullah, 1987); or [How similar are you to] "kids from other countries who don't fit in well" (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985).

Ethnic behaviors (Participation in cultural practices and activities)

The majority of studies of ethnic identity include assessment of behaviors and practices relative to a particular group, such as language usage, friendship, religion, and politics. These are discussed in detail in the following sections. Assessment can be made of actual practices (e.g., participates in ethnic clubs and organizations) or of hypothetical or preferred practices (e.g., against mixed marriages; prefers to associate with own group). Since it is usually impossible to tell from

an article which is being tapped, actual and preferred practices are discussed together.

Language. Language is the most widely assessed cultural practice associated with ethnic identity. However, but it is included in less than half of the studies. The largest group in which language is assessed are studies of White subjects. Most of these studies deal with subjects who have emigrated from Continental Europe to an English-speaking country (United States, Canada, England, or Australia) and have the option of retaining their language; some are living in their country of origin (Wales) where English is dominant. Language is also assessed in a study involving American Jews in Israel, and seven of the nine studies of Hispanics in the United States include assessment of the use of Spanish. In addition, several studies examine the desire of adults to have their children learn their ethnic language (Caltabiano, 1984, Leclezio et al., 1986, Teske & Nelson, 1973).

Although language has been considered by some as the single most important component of ethnic identity, its importance clearly varies with the particular situation, and it is inappropriate for some groups. None of the studies of Black identity have included language, even though familiarity with Black English is considered an important marker of Black identity (Kochman, 1987).

Friendship. Roughly a fourth of the studies assess friendship, using items such as ratings of "Importance of ingroup friends" and "ingroup dating" (Driedger, 1975); "Ethnic background of friends" (Garcia, 1982); or other measures of ethnic friendships. Studies that consider friendship as an aspect of ethnic identity represent a variety of groups, with the

exception of Blacks; no studies with Black subjects include this component.

Religious affiliation and practice. This component is assessed in under a fourth of the studies, using items related to church membership, attending religious ceremonies, parochial education, religious preference. These are largely studies of White ethnic groups, with some Hispanic and one Jewish group; no studies of Blacks include this aspect of ethnic identity.

Structured ethnic social groups. About a fifth of the studies evaluate participation in ethnic clubs, societies or organizations as a component of ethnic identity. The ethnic groups included is this category are mostly White, with Asians and Hispanics also represented, but no Black groups.

Political ideology and activity. A sixth of the studies assess involvement in political activities on behalf of one's ethnic group. A disproportionate number, half of these, are from studies with Blacks. Typical items are: "I frequently confront the system and the man" (Krate et al., 1974; Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b); ..."A commitment to the development of Black power dominates my behavior" (Krate et al., 1974); "I constantly involve myself in Black political and social activities" (Parham & Helms, 1981; 1985a; 1985b). One study of Mexican-Americans also includes the question: "Are you active in any political organization which is specifically Mexican-American oriented?" (Teske & Nelson, 1973). Some studies with White ethnics mention involvement with the politics of one's country of origin (Constantinou & Harvey, 1985).

Area of residence. In a few studies, the subject's area of residence

is included. In some cases, the geographical region is assessed (Giles et al., 1976, Giles et al., 1977, Taylor et al., 1973). In others, items tap the number or proportion of ingroup members in one's neighborhood (Der-Karabetian, 1980), for example, "[Subject] chooses to live in an area where others (ingroup members) have settled" (Caltabiano, 1984); or assess "[subject's] readiness to live in an integrated neighborhood" (Tzuriel & Klein, 1977). This component has not been included in studies of Blacks.

Miscellaneous ethnic/cultural activities and attitudes. In addition to those elements already mentioned, a wide variety of specific cultural activities and attitudes are assessed. Half of the studies, distributed across all the groups studied, include one or more of the following miscellaneous cultural items: ethnic music, songs, dances, dress; newspapers, periodicals, books, literature; food or cooking; entertainment (movies, radio, TV, plays, sports, etc.); traditional celebrations; traditional family roles, values, and namesvisits to, and continued interest in, the homeland; endogamy or opposition to mixed marriages; and knowledge about ethnic culture or history. These are most often assessed by direct questions. However one study (of Chinese Americans) asks subjects to rate themselves on attitudes or values that are presumed to be characteristic of a group; for example, agreement with the statement that "A good child is an obedient child" (Ting-Toomey, 1981).

An analysis of the ways in which researchers have assessed the concept of ethnic identity has revealed the inadequacies of the specific ethnic group approach. A number of studies have succeeded in defining the

essential characteristics of a particular group and in demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of the concept. However, the results have little generality beyond the group in question. As long as researchers continue to use new measures for each group of interest and have no measures in common that can be used across groups, there can be little progress toward a general understanding of ethnic identity.

THE STRUCTURE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

Regardless of the components studied, most researchers have acknowledged the complex, multi-dimensional nature of ethnic identity. Considerable effort has been directed at determining its structure, by examining the salience of particular components, the way components of ethnic identity hang together in clusters, and the interrelationships among them.

Salience

Salience as seen by the researcher is revealed implicitly in the components that are studied for particular groups. Examination of the studies as a whole reveals that different components have been selected by researchers studying different groups. For White ethnic groups, language and a variety of miscellaneous cultural activities have been most widely used as indicators of ethnic identity, and attitudes have been considered somewhat less important. In the assessment of Jewish identity, ethnic affirmation and denial are included far more than with other White groups, while language is less frequently included. In studies with Hispanics, language is treated as a dominant component. A distinctive pattern emerges from the studies of American Blacks. Attitudes are the most widely used element, and the measures generally

include both pro-Black and anti-White attitudes. Also, political activity is more evident as a criteria for Blacks than for the other groups, but assessment of language, friends, social groups, and neighborhood are almost completely absent.

Several studies have examined the relative salience of particular components, but these have been carried out with only a few selected groups, and the findings are inconsistent. For example, a number of studies have suggested that language is one of the most important elements of ethnic identity (Giles et al., 1976; Giles et al., 1977; Leclezio et al., 1986; Taylor et al., 1973). However, a study carried out in a different setting showed that language was not salient (Giles et al., 1979). In addition, language is seldom included in studies involving particular groups, such as Blacks. The salience of any component can be expected to vary depending not only on the group, but also on the particular setting.

Clusters

Given the many different types of items that have been used to assess ethnic identity, it is not surprising that a number of researchers have attempted to find ways to group them. Most often, this is done by factor analysis, although in some cases it is done intuitively. Studies that attempt to group items have found from two to six factors or clusters (Table 1). As with the components themselves, there is little consistency in the clusters or factors across studies. The difficulty with factor analysis is illustrated in a study in which factor analysis was carried out separately for each of three ethnic groups and two age levels; each analysis revealed different factors (Rosenthal & Hrynevich,

1985). Taken as a whole, Table 1 indicates broadly the groupings of elements seen as important in most studies. Identification with the group, positive attitudes or pride, and cultural activities, in various combinations, are dominant elements.

Table 1 about here

Relationship among components

The discussion of relationships among aspects of ethnic identity is complicated by the diversity of terminology, since the names for components and for ethnic identity itself are used differently across studies. As with salience and factor analysis, studies of interrelationships have yielded different results depending on the groups studied.

A persistent question is the relationship between what people say they are (ethnic self-identification) and what they actually do (ethnic behaviors). One of the more comprehensive studies, which measured separately a variety of components and analyzed their intercorrelations, found a complex set of relationships, including a negative relationship between ethnic self-identification and preference for various ethnic practices (Garcia, 1982). A study with Armenian Americans suggested that ethnic identity, defined by eight items assessing sense of belonging, was related to involvement in ethnic activities (Der-Karabetian, 1980). Two studies carried out in England examining the relationship between self-identification and cultural behaviors obtained conflicting results: A study of Irish adolescents in England (Ullah, 1987) found a close

relationship between ethnic self-definition and indices of ethnic group behavior. In contrast, a study of East Indian adolescents in England (Hutnik, 1986) found little relationship between ethnic identity and behavior.

Other studies have looked at relationships among aspects such as ethnic self-identification, pride and sense of affiliation. For example, among second generation Irish adolescents in England, self-identification as Irish was related to pride in their Irish background; those who called themselves English were more likely to hide the fact of their Irish background (Ullah, 1985). When salience of ethnicity was increased among Welsh students, through an experimental manipulation, subjects expressed closer affiliation with their group (Christian et al., 1976).

Because of the differences in the definition and measurement of components, it is impossible to determine whether the conflicting results that have been obtained are differences among the groups studied or derive from the way the components are measured. Until consistent measures are used across a variety of groups, these contradictions will be difficult to resolve.

ETHNIC IDENTITY IN RELATION TO THE MAJORITY CULTURE

Studies have varied depending on whether the focus has been primarily on the ethnic group in question or whether the researcher has a dual focus that includes the relationship to the majority culture.

Single group focus

A number of studies have focused on a single group; assessment is made with reference only to the group in question, and the various components or factors of ethnic identity are seen as contributing to the

degree or strength of subjects' relationship with that group, independent of the relationship to the majority culture. Some of these studies provide qualitative description of a group's characteristics (Keefe, 1986), while others use quantitative measures that permit assigning scores to subjects for the degree or strength of their ethnic identity (Constantinou & Harvey, 1985; Garcia & Lega, 1979).

Bipolar model

In several cases, ethnic identity is conceptualized along a bipolar continuum, from strong ethnic ties to strong mainstream ties (Makabe, 1979; Ullah, 1985), but the mainstream relationship is not assessed independently.

Dual focus

A substantial number of studies include independent assessment of the relationship to both the ethnic group and the dominant or mainstream culture. The assumption in this case is that the orientation of individuals relative to the majority culture is an important but variable factor in ethnic identity. That is, minority group members can have either strong or weak identifications with both their own and the mainstream culture, and a strong ethnic identity does not necessarily imply a weak relationship to the dominant culture.

A model that applies to many of these studies is similar to an acculturation model based on two orthogonal dimensions (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). An example is a study of ethnic identity with adolescent girls of East Indian extraction living in England (Hutnik, 1986). The study assessed separately self-identification (as Indian or British) and Indian and British cultural behaviors. The results support an orthogonal

model, yielding four possible outcomes. Strong identification with both groups is indicative of acculturation; identification with neither suggest marginality. An exclusive identification with the majority culture indicates assimilation; such an identification with only the ethnic group indicates dissociation. A similar picture emerges from a study of White ethnic groups in Canada (Driedger, 1976). Group scores demonstrated varying degrees of ethnic affirmation and denial, resulting in three types of ethnic identity: majority assimilator, ethnic identifiers, and ethnic marginals. Similarly, studies of Armenian-Americans (Der-Karabetian, 1980) Jewish Americans (Zak, 1973), and Chinese Americans (Ting-Toomey, 1981) found ethnic identity and American identity to be independent dimensions. The various terms that have been used are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

However, results from other studies give different results. A study that compared bipolar and orthogonal models of ethnic identity among Israelis living in the United States suggested that attitudes and behaviors relative to being Israeli, Jewish or American were not independent (Elias & Blanton, 1987). Affective measures of the three aspects of identity were positively intercorrelated, while behavioral measures were negatively related; subjects who engaged in many typical American behaviors showed fewer Israeli behaviors. In another study of Israelis residing in the United States (Elizur, 1984), Jewish and American identity tended to be negatively related.

More complex results emerge from two studies which use qualitative data. An extensive study of Mexican-American and Asian-American adults (Clark et al., 1976) revealed six profiles representing different combinations of attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge relative to own and American culture. A qualitative study of Mexican-American high school students (Matute-Bianchi, 1986) demonstrated five types of ethnic identity, depending on the students' degree of involvement in their own ethnic culture and the mainstream culture of the high school.

The value of studies such as these, which assess mainstream as well as ethnic orientation, has been in emphasizing that ethnic identity is not necessarily a linear construct; it can be conceptualized in terms of qualitatively different ways of relating to one's own and other groups. A problem in using this more complex comceptualization is in assessing the attributes of the contrast group. The characteristics of mainstream culture are far more difficult to define than those of a particular subculture.

However, insofar as there are in fact different types of ethnic identity, as suggested by Table 2, then studies examining the relationship of ethnic identity to other factors need to clarify which type is being considered. Some of the contradictions and inconsistencies noted in this review may a function of differences in the degree to which researchers have considered identification with both the ethnic group and the mainstream culture.

CHANGES IN ETHNIC IDENTITY OVER CONTEXT AND TIME

Writers generally have agreed that ethnic identity is a dynamic

concept, but relatively few have addressed changes over time and setting. Changes related to generational status among immigrant groups have been the most widely studied aspect of change. A few studies examine context and developmental changes. Findings related to these changes are reviewed here. However, it should be kept in mind that the studies have used different conceptualizations, definitions, and measures of ethnic identity, so that the findings cannot necessarily be compared across studies.

Generation of immigration

The term ethnic identity has sometimes been used as virtually synonymous with acculturation, but the two terms should be distinguished. The concept of acculturation deals primarily with changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors that result from contact between two distinct cultures (Berry et al., 1986). Ethnic identity also depends on contact with another culture, since it is defined in part by an awareness of membership in a distinct group. However, acculturation research focuses on adaptation at the group level, while ethnic identity research focuses on the way in which individuals incorporate awareness of group membership into their self-concept (Tajfel, 1981). In addition, acculturation is an inappropriate term for non-immigrant ethnic groups or groups who have resided for so long in another culture that their current ethnic culture is not clearly distinct from mainstream culture (e.g., American Blacks, many Hispanics in the American southwest, fourth generation Japanese Americans). Although the two concepts can be distinguished conceptually, some studies of changes in ethnic identity are very similar to acculturation studies; they should be distinguished

by a focus on the way the individual interprets the acculturation process.

Studies of generational differences in ethnic identity have shown a fairly consistent decline in ethnic group identification in later generations of immigrants (Constantinou & Harvey, 1985; Fathi, 1972). Similarly, ethnic identity was found to be weaker among those who arrived at a younger age and had lived longer in the new country (Garcia & Lega, 1979; Rogler, Cooney, & Ortiz, 1980), and those with more education (Rogler et al., 1980). However, a study of third and fourth generation Japanese American youth found virtually no generational difference (Wooden, Leon, & Toshima, 1988), and a study using Chinese-Americans suggests a cyclical process, with ethnic identity becoming more important in third and fourth generation immigrants (Ting-Toomey, 1981)].

A study of three age groups in Japan (Masuda, Hasegawa, & Matsumoto, 1973) illustrates the possible confounding of generation with age and cultural change. Older Japanese scored higher than younger individuals in a measure of Japanese identification, in results similar to the generational differences among Japanese immigrants. Comparisons between younger (second generation) and older (first generation) subjects may thus tap age as well as cohort differences. A retrospective interview study with elderly Croatians noted an intensification of ethnic sentiments during later life (Simic, 1987). Thus intra-individual variation, as well as age and generation changes, need to be clearly distinguished in future research.

Context

Ethnic identity is to a large extent defined by context; it is not

an issue except in terms of a contrast group, usually the majority culture. The particular context would seem to be an essential factor to consider, yet relatively few studies have examined it in any detail. Adolescents report that their feelings of being ethnic vary depending on the situation and the people they are with (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985). Ethnic identity has been found to be positively related to the ethnic density of the neighborhood (Garcia & Lega, 1979) and negatively to the occupational and residential mobility of subjects (Makabe, 1979); it varies among communities within the same state (Teske & Nelson, 1973). The impact of the environment on Black identity has been investigated through studies of transracial adoption. Racial identity was more of a problem for Black children and adolescents adopted into White homes than for those adopted by Black parents, although the self-esteem of the two groups did not differ (McRoy et al., 1982). Furthermore, the parental attitudes and perceptions had an important impact on the racial identity of transracial adoptees (McRoy et al., 1984). There has been little research on such presumably important factors as the relative size of the ethnic group (at the local or national level) or its status in the community.

Gender

Although gender is not strictly a contextual factor, it may be that there are different cultural expectations for males and females, such as the assumption that women are the carriers of ethnic traditions. The very little research that addresses this issue suggests a greater involvement in ethnicity by females than males. Research with Chinese-American college students found females more oriented to their ancestral culture

than males (Ting-Toomey, 1981), and a drawing study showed higher Black identification in females (Bolling, 1974). Among Irish adolescents in England, girls were significantly more likely than boys to adopt an Irish identity (Ullah, 1985). Japanese females tended to score higher than males on Japanese ethnic identity (Masuda, Hasegawa, & Matsumoto, 1973). However, among East Indian and Anglo-Saxon adolescents in England, females, compared to males, were more willing to have social contacts with other groups (Hogg et al., 1987).

Developmental change

In childhood, age has been widely studied as a factor in ethnic identity (more accurately, self-identification; Aboud, 1987), but age differences have been studied only rarely in adolescence and beyond. Many of the studies in the current review focus on adolescence, but only eight (Krate et al., 1974; Morten & Atkinson, 1983; Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, in press; Phinney & Tarver, 1988) are based on a model of developmental changes in ethnic identity that would be expected during the identity formation process characteristic of adolescents (Erikson, 1968). Because of the neglect of this factor in ethnic identity research and because of its potential usefulness in resolving some of the conflicting results presented earlier, the developmental view will be explored here in some detail.

Several conceptual models have attempted to describe ethnic identity development in minority adolescents or adults. Although these models have limited empirical support, they are discussed briefly here as background for the developmental studies presented later. Cross (1978) described a model of the development of Black consciousness in college students

during the Civil Rights era. A dissertation by Kim (1981) described Asian-American identity development in a group of young adult Asian-American females. A model based on clinical experience has been proposed by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983), and Arce (1981) has conceptualized the issues with regard to Chicanos.

These conceptualizations of ethnic identity development share with Erikson (1968) the idea that an achieved identity is the result of an identity crisis, which involves a period of exploration and experimentation, leading to a decision or commitment. Marcia's (1966) empirical work on ego identity, derived from Erikson's theory, suggests four identity statuses based on the extent of exploration and commitment. An individual who has neither engaged in exploration nor made a commitment is said to be diffuse; a commitment made without exploration, usually on the basis of parental values, represents a foreclosed status. An individual in the process of exploration without having made a commitment is in moratorium; a firm commitment following a period of exploration is indicative of an achieved identity.

A recent study (Phinney, 1989) presents a model of ethnic identity development that integrates the ego identity statuses and the ethnic identity models and provides evidence for distinct stages of ethnic identity. A little over half of a sample of Asian American, Black, and Hispanic tenth graders had given little or no thought to ethnicity as an issue in their lives, that is, they had not engaged in a search process. Some of these adolescents could be considered to have a diffuse ethnic identity, in that they had no clear conception about their ethnicity. Others appeared to have a foreclosed ethnic identity, in the sense of

having accepted the majority culture's negative view of their ethnic group without having thought much about it; for example, they expressed a preference for being White if they had a choice. This phase is termed "pre-encounter" by Cross (1978). Research with Black subjects (Krate et al., 1974; Morten & Atkinson, 1983; Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b) has assumed that this initial stage is characterized by a positive orientation toward the dominant culture, accompanied by negative attitudes towards one's own culture. Thus items to assess this stage for Black subjects include feelings that White culture is superior (Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b). However, individuals may perhaps avoid this phase by accepting the positive ethnic attitudes which parents or other adults have provided, to insulate children from society's negative views (Spencer, 1987).

The initial stage, either ethnic identity diffusion or foreclosure, is followed by the moratorium stage, that is, extended exploration of the issues surrounding ethnicity and the meaning of one's ethnic group membership. About a quarter of the minority adolescents in the Phinney (1989) study were in the process of exploring their ethnicity. An interview study with Black and White eighth graders reported that a third of the subjects had explored the meaning of their ethnicity by thinking about it, talking to family and friends, reading books, and so forth (Phinney & Tarver, 1988). Cross and other Black writers use the term "immersion" to characterize this period of intense, often emotional involvement with one's own culture, suggesting that it is accompanied by negative attitudes toward the dominant culture. Items for this stage include the following: "I find myself reading a lot of Black literature

and thinking about being Black"; "White people can't be trusted" (Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b).

A resolution of the identity crisis leads to an achieved ethnic identity, termed "internalization" by Cross (1978) and others. Eighth graders in an interview study demonstrated their commitment to their ethnic identity in statements like the following: "My feelings about being Black have gotten stronger in the last year... Now I know and I understand (what being Black means)" (Phinney & Tarver, 1988). Among tenth grade minority students, about a fifth showed evidence of having an achieved ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989). Items that have been used to tap this stage include: "Being Black just feels natural to me"; "I have a positive attitude about myself because I am Black" (Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b).

The developmental model assumes that with increasing age, subjects are more likely to be ethnic identity achieved. While there is little empirical support of this, some results are suggestive of a developmental progression. Among eighth graders, about a third showed evidence of ethnic identity search (Phinney & Tarver, 1988); among tenth graders, the comparable figure was about half (Phinney, 1989). In a study using the Cross (1978) model, Black college students reported a change in their perceptions of themselves in the past, present, and future, as shifting from lower to higher levels of Black identity (Krate et al., 1974).

Although the process model of ethnic identity has not been widely used, it provides the possibility of resolving conflicting findings regarding ethnic identity. Both attitudes and behaviors with respect to one's own and other groups are conceptualized as changing as one develops

and resolves issues and feelings about own and other groups. Positive and negative attitudes towards one's own and other groups may reflect different stages of development, rather than permanent characteristics of the group or individuals studied. Some discrepancies in the findings regarding relationships among components of ethnic identity, reported earlier in this review, may be a result of subjects at different stages of development.

In summary, the quality and structure of ethnic identity may change over time, both as a function a particular context, the time spent in that context, and the way in which individuals have explored and resolved issues concerning to the implications of their ethnic group membership. The developmental model suggests that individuals from the same group, and even at the same age, may be at different places in their thinking and deciding about the role of their ethnic background in their lives. Future research needs to take into account such changes in ethnic identity.

PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

When ethnic identity has been considered a variable in research (in contrast to simply being defined and measured), the thrust of research has been to identify factors that influence its strength or nature, as in most of the research discussed previously. A less common approach, discussed here, has been to consider it as an independent variable and examine its relationship to personal characteristics. As noted earlier, these results should be viewed with caution because of the varied definitions and measurement of key concepts.

Self-esteem and ego identity

A central question in research with children has been the impact of their ethnic identification on their self-concept or self-esteem (Cross, 1987). This question has been far less studied beyond childhood, but a number of studies have addressed it. Racial acceptance was found to be positively correlated with self-esteem among Black adolescents (Paul & Fischer, 1980), but Black consciousness was unrelated to self-esteem in Black college students (Houston, 1984). A study with Anglo and Mexican-American junior high school students found a positive relationship between ethnic esteem and self-esteem (Grossman et al., 1985). Among Israeli high school students, ego identity was higher among those with high ethnic group identification than those with low identification, especially among the Oriental Jews, a minority group in Israel (Tzuriel & Klein, 1977).

By analogy with the ego-identity literature, which finds positive psychological outcomes associated with an achieved identity (Marcia, 1980), the developmental model predicts higher self-esteem in subjects with an achieved ethnic identity. This prediction is supported in a study with tenth grade Black, Asian American and Mexcian American adolescents which found that subjects at higher stages of ethnic identity had significantly higher scores on all four subscales of a measure of psychological adjustment (Phinney, 1989). A similar relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem was found among college students; the relationship was stronger among minority group members than among their White peers (Phinney & Alipuria, in press). A study with Black college students, based on the Cross (1978) process model, found that low self-esteem was related to the earliest stage (pre-encounter) and to the

immersion (moratorium) stage, while high self-esteem was associated with the encounter stage, which involves events that precipitate a search or immersion (Parham & Helms, 1985a). In a related study, the pre-encounter and immersion stages were found to be related to feelings of inferiority and anxiety (Parham & Helms, 1985b).

School achievement

In a qualitative study of Mexican-American high school students (Matute-Bianchi, 1986), five different types of Mexican-American identity were described; students representing two of these types, the Mexican-oriented and the Mexican-American, were generally the most successful in school, while the Chicano and Cholo students, more embedded in the "barrio" culture, were the least successful. Ethnic identity was also found to be a factor in visual retention (Knuckle & Asbury, 1986).

Preference for counselor

Several studies have examined the impact of ethnic identity stages on preference for a counselor. Black college students in the early stages preferred White counselors (Parham & Helms, 1981), while those in the intermediate stages showed a preference for Black counselors (Parham & Helms, 1981, Morten & Atkinson, 1983). Results for subjects at the highest stage are mixed; they may show Black preference (Parham & Helms, 1981) or no preference (Morten & Atkinson, 1983). Stages of ethnic identity development in Blacks are also related to perceptions of White counselors (Pomales, Claiborn, & LaFromboise, 1986).

In summary, only a few studies have addressed the implications of ethnic identity for other aspects of personality in adolescents and adults. As in other areas discussed, the varied methods of study make

generalization difficult. Ethnic identity is likely to have a bearing on self-esteem but the relationship is unclear.

THEORETICAL BASES OF RESEARCH

It is not the goal of this review to discuss the complex conceptual and theoretical issues related to ethnic identity. However, in examining empirical work on the topic, it is useful to determine what theories have been cited and to what extent research has been based on theory. Of the studies reviewed, only about a third are clearly based on a major, widely cited conceptual or theoretical framework. Five studies (Bourhis et al., 1973; Hutnik, 1985; Hogg et al., 1987; Ullah, 1985, 1987) derive from the social identity theory of Tajfel (1978, 1981) and his colleagues (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which asserts that minority individuals, in order to maintain a positive self-image, use various strategies to overcome the negative stereotypes of their groups. Three other studies (Der-Karabetian, 1980; Driedger, 1976; Zak, 1973) are in a similar social psychological framework, but cite Lewinian field theory (Lewin, 1948; Cartwright, 1951) on the importance of identification with an ingroup and the possible conflict resulting from participation to two separate groups.

Another group of studies (Clark et al., 1976; Driedger, 1975; Garcia, 1979; Hutnik, 1986; Singh, 1977; Vermeulen & Pels, 1984) draws on literature on acculturation and assimilation, primarily works of Glazer and Moynihan (1970), Berry and his colleagues (e.g., Berry & Annis, 1974; Sommerlad & Berry, 1970), or Barth (1969).

The writings Erikson (1963, 1968) on identity development and the impact on social and cultural factors on identity are cited in a number

of studies (e.g., Zisenwine & Walters, 1982) and are of central importance in at least four studies (Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, in press; Phinney & Tarver, 1988; Tzuriel & Klein, 1977). Psycholanalytic identity formation theory is stressed by Lax & Richards (1981). Black identity development as described by Cross (1978) is the basis for five studies (Carter & Helms, 1978; Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985a, 1985b; Pomales et al., 1986).

Clearly the topic lacks a unified theoretical base. Tajfel's (1978) monograph provides the most specific predictions about minority group identity that could be tested in research, but it lacks the developmental perspective provided by Erikson on the process by which identity issues are resolved. Given the lack of solid empirical data on ethnic identity, it would difficult at this time to construct an integrated theory.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A theme throughout this review has been the lack of coherence in research on ethnic identity, due to the diversity of definitions, measures, goals, and theoretical bases. Two essential first steps in bringing coherence to the field are to agree on a common vocabulary to be used by researchers and to develop uniform measures that can be used across groups. These two issues are discussed in this section, followed by suggestions for further research.

Definition of concepts

Across studies, the same terms have been used with very different meanings, and different terms have been used with the same meaning. The problem is particularly evident with the term "ethnic identity" itself, but also with many related terms such as "ethnic identification," "ethnic

acceptance," and "ethnic pride." For example, in some studies, discussion of "ethnic identity" has been based on narrow measures (only one or two items; self-identification alone; or only one aspect of the concept, such as language usage, salience, or ideology). Other studies use a wide range of items or procedures to tap ethnic identity, but use the term itself for only one component, e.g., self-identification. Still others use the term in a very broad, global sense.

A related problem is that in some cases the same term is used in different ways within the same study; for example, a term is used in a vague, often undefined sense, in the introduction and discussion sections, and in a more precise operationally defined sense in the method and results sections. The meaning of the findings is then very difficult to untangle.

In order for the understanding of ethnic identity to progress beyond its current fragmented state, uniform definitions need to be adopted. On the basis of the articles reviewed, the following operational definitions are suggested:

Ethnic identity. A global, comprehensive term appropriate for the entire area of study, referring to an individual's sense of self as member of an ethnic group and the attitudes and behaviors associated with that sense. As a precise term used in research, it should include the major components that have been identified: self-identification as a group member, identification with the group, ethnic attitudes and behaviors, and, in developmental studies, stage of ethnic identity development.

Identification, identify: This term, either as a noun or a verb, is

particularly troublesome, because of its many different connotations, including very different meanings when followed by "with" and "as." It therefore needs to be used with particular care. The term alone is too ambiguous to be meaningful; it should always be in a context that specifies the meaning. The following usage is suggested:

Self-identification as or to self-identify as: The ethnic group name or label one chooses in describing oneself. By the age of 7-10, children know their "correct" label (Aboud, 1987). In adolescents and adults, the label becomes to some extent a matter of choice (e.g., Black or Afro-American; Mexican-American or Chicano; Polish-American or simply American). People of mixed background typically self-identify as a members of a single group, although they may call themselves mixed.

Identification with (a group), ethnic group identification or to identify with: The sense of being part of an ethnic group. The acculturation literature suggests that it is possible to identify with two different cultures, usually one's own and the majority culture. Therefore, self-identification as a group member and identification with a group may not necessarily coincide, although they usually do. One could, for example, self-identify as Mexican American but identify with the majority culture.

Ethnicity: One's ethnic group membership as determined by one's parents' ethnic group or country of origin. If this variable is determined in research by asking subjects to indicate their ethnicity, it becomes confounded with ethnic self-identification. To accurately

assess ethnicity, subjects should indicate their parents' backgrounds, and only subjects with two parents from the same group should be considered members of that group. Subjects whose parents are from two different ethnic groups should be treated separately, as mixed or bi-ethnic.

Ethnic attitudes: Positive feelings, such as pride and acceptance, and negative feelings, including rejection dislike, towards one's own ethnic group. The terms "affirmation" and "denial" can appropriately be used for subsets of attitudes towards one's own group.

Ethnic behaviors: Any of the specific behaviors associated with or typical or members of various groups, including language, social interaction (institutions, friendships, marriage, etc.), and cultural practices.

Ethnic identity development: The process of development from an unexamined ethnic identity, through a period of exploration, to arrive at an achieved ethnic identity. This aspect of ethnic identity is relevant primarily in studies with adolescents and young adults, but may also be applicable to older individuals as well. It is applicable also to changes that occur with social change, as during the Civil Rights era (Cross, 1987).

If this terminology is adopted, a start could be made in comparing studies and developing a sound base of data on this complex subject.

A uniform measure for use across ethnic groups

The research reviewed has dealt almost exclusively with a single ethnic group, or in some cases two groups. Such work is valuable in clarifying the issues for particular groups and suggesting implications

relevant to those groups. Yet researchers have frequently drawn from this work conclusions that are presented as applicable across groups. In order for research to lead to conclusions that have general applicability, it is essential to study the phenomenon across a variety or groups and settings, using comparable measures.

Attempting to study ethnic identity across groups presents a fundamental problem. An essential component of ethnic identity, as conceptualized by many researchers, is the uniqueness that sets one group apart from all others; if assessing ethnic identity of group members requires assessing those unique characteristics, it is clearly impossible to measure it across groups or to compare groups. However, the information presented in this review reveals a number of common elements that cut across groups and suggests the essential components of ethnic identity. Many of the components of ethnic identity are universally applicable or could be stated in ways that have universal applicability. The scales used in studying Jewish and Arab identity (Zak, 1973, 1976) and adapted in studying Armenians in the United States (Der-Karabetian, 1980) illustrate items that can be applied to different groups. A measure of general applicability would of course need to use general terms in place of the name of the specific group.

A valid measure requires a conceptual model of the construct to be measured. Phinney (in preparation) suggests a model of ethnic identity that includes both the individual's ethnic group identification and the developmental process by which an ethnic identity is achieved. Ways of measuring these aspects are discussed here with examples of possible items to tap each area.[1]

Assessment of ethnic group identification should include ethnic self-identification (e.g., "I call myself_____"), identification with the group ("I have a strong sense of belonging to my own group"), affirmation ("I have a sense of pride in my ethnic group"), denial ("If I were to be born all over again, I would want to be born into a different ethnic group"), and ethnic behaviors ("I participate in cultural practices of my own group").

Orientation toward the majority culture is an important aspect of ethnic group identification, but, as mentioned earlier, is difficult to assess, as the majority culture typically lacks distinguishing attitudes and behaviors. A possible solution is to assess orientation towards other groups generally; for example, positive and negative attitudes towards other groups ("I enjoy being around people from other ethnic groups and learning about their culture"; "When I see people from another ethnic group, I often feel like avoiding them") and involvement with other groups ("I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own").

The process of ethnic identity development can be assessed in terms of exploration and resolution of ethnic identity issues. Items can investigate the extent to which individuals have explored the meaning and implications of their ethnicity ("I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs") and their clarity about the significance of ethnicity in their life ("I am very clear about where I fit into society in terms of belonging to a particular ethnic group").

Clearly, there are important methodological and measurement issues

to be resolved, but the need for reliable and valid measures is equally clear, if an general understanding of ethnic identity is sought.

Directions for research

Once consistent definitions are adopted and valid measures developed, research could begin to resolve the inconsistencies that are evident in previous research regarding the structure of ethnic identity, the relationships among aspects, and differences among groups. Moreover, research could be extended beyond the social psychological approach that has been most widely used, to elucidate the developmental influences and personality correlates of ethnic identity. A particularly important question to be examined is the implication of ethnic identity for psychological adjustment; for example, the extent to which self-esteem is related to the various types of ethnic identity suggested in Table 2. Specifically, can self-esteem be equally high in individuals who are acculturated, ethnically embedded (or dissociated), or even assimilated? The extent to which these are equally healthy forms of ethnic identity may depend on whether the individual has an achieved ethnic identity, that is, has explored the issues and made a conscious decision.

Changes in ethnic identity in adolescents and adults, as a factor of both age and historical trends, need further elucidation, as do the ways in which individuals arrive at decisions regarding the role that ethnicity plays in their lives. Also important is the investigation of factors that influence ethnic identity formation, such as parental teaching and community structure. In short, along with clarification of group processes in ethnic identity, there is need for increased attention to the psychological implications of ethnic identity at the individual

level.

In addition, past research has neglected socioeconomic status as a variable and, like most psychological research, has generally used middle class samples. Because some ethnic minority groups are substantially under-represented in the middle class, findings based on college students or other middle class samples, may lack generality. Even data from high school surveys may be distorted, since lower class students are more likely to not obtain parent permission, to be absent from school, or to have reading problems (Phinney & Tarver, 1988). The confounding of socioeconomic status and ethnicity as a personal identity issue has been eloquently stated by Steele (1988).

Another significant problem that has been virtually ignored in research is that of individuals from mixed backgrounds. There has been little documentation of this growing phenomenon, and it has been difficult to study, as many subjects identify themselves as members of one group even though they in fact have a mixed background (Alba & Chamlin, 1983; Salgado de Snyder, Lopez, & Padilla, 1982; Singh, 1977). Anecdotal evidence indicates that in some cases women who have married Hispanics are considered to be Hispanic because of their name, as are children whose father is Hispanic, regardless of mother's ethnicity. In general, individuals with one minority group parent are considered to be of that group. The responses of all such individuals to items assessing aspects of ethnic identity may well distort the findings. Collecting data on the ethnicity of both parents and distinguishing subjects from mixed backgrounds is an essential step in dealing with this problem.

SUMMARY

In spite of considerable interest in the topic of ethnic identity from a variety of fields, the research is fragmented and atheoretical, and the findings have limited generality. The topic has been studied largely by individual researchers studying a single group; in most cases, each researcher has developed a new measure for the group or topic of interest. As a result, widely different approaches have been used in attempting to understand ethnic identity, and there is little agreement on what constitutes its essential components, or even what terms to use in talking about it. Furthermore, very different conceptualizations, for example, of the relationship to the majority culture and of changes over time, and different theoretical orientations have guided the research.

In order to make sense of this area of research and begin to build a body of knowledge, it is essential to agree on definitions and to develop and validate measures that can be used in common by researchers working with different groups. With such definitions and measures, there are a variety of important questions to be addressed. It is hoped that the definitions presented here and the type of measure suggested will make a start in this effort.

NOTE

1 A measure incorporating the features described has been developed and is being tested by the author. Copies are available by writing to the author.

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Table 1

Ethnic identity clusters identified in research

Two clusters

-- Political: radical separatist/conservative integrationist;
Cultural (Welsh vs. English). (Christian et al., 1976)

-- Externalities: bonds with the ancestral land (e.g., visits, language, politics);
Internalities: bonds within ethnic community (e.g., friends, church, endogamy, newspaper). (Constantinou & Harvey, 1985)

-- Affirmation: pride, strong bonds, cultural activities;
Denial: desire to hide identity, feelings of inferiority. (Driedger, 1976)

-- Social identity: friends, language, religion, traditions;
Personal identity: origin, heritage. (Leclezio et al., 1986)

-- Ethnic loyalty: cultural events, social networks;
Cultural awareness: language, knowledge of history and culture. (Salgado de Snyder et al., 1981)

-- Identity: self-identification, attitudes;
Interaction: social and cultural activities. (Teske & Nelson, 1973

Three clusters

-- Self-definition; Language; Economic wealth. (Giles et al., 1979)

-- Ethnic sentiment (positive attitudes); Ethnic identification; Social distance.[1] (Hogg et al., 1987)

Four clusters

-- Sociocultural activities; Family factor; Ingroup (belonging, residence); Conservative/traditional. (Caltabiano, 1984)

-- Associational preferences; Friendship; Cultural preferences; Cultural holidays. (Garcia, 1982)

Five clusters

-- Ethnic socialization; Language retention; Organizations; Friendship; Self-identification. (Makabe, 1979)

Six clusters

-- Endogamy; Friends; Language; Organizations; Parochial education; Religion. (Driedger, 1975)

Clusters vary with group and age

-- Identification; Non-acceptance; Pride in culture; Cultural cohesion; Maintenance of boundaries; Migrant factor; and others. (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985)

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[1] Plus one factor unrelated to ethnicity

Table 2

Terms used for four types of ethnic identity, based on degree of identification with both the ethnic group and the majority group.

		Identification with Ethnic Group	
		Strong	Weak
Identification with Majority Group	Strong	Acculturated Integrated Bicultural	Assimilated
	Weak	Ethnically identified Ethnically embedded Separated Dissociated	Marginal